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Governor



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FOUR NC METROS NAMED AMONG BEST PLACES FOR BUSINESS AND CAREERS

RALEIGH—Four North Carolina metro areas appear on *Forbes Magazine's* latest list of top-150 best places for business and careers, Gov. Mike Easley announced. Raleigh-Durham placed 3rd in the rankings, followed by Charlotte (37), Greensboro (102) and Hickory (128).

"These rankings show that North Carolina's continued emphasis on economic development across the state is paying off," said Easley. "From large urban centers like Raleigh-Durham, Charlotte and Greensboro to growing areas like Hickory, we are experiencing significant growth in some of our key industries. This growth will help continue the transformation of our economy and provide good jobs for North Carolina families."

Each of these areas improved its place on the list over last year's ranking. Notably, Raleigh-Durham jumped 17 places from its 20th ranking in 2002, and Charlotte improved from 86 to 37. Reasons for the improvements included high rankings in the cost-of-business and educational attainment/advanced degree categories. Raleigh-Durham received the second highest ranking of residents with an advanced degree, an important indicator of a qualified and knowledgeable workforce.

North Carolina metro areas also fared well in an accompanying list of best small places for business and careers. Seven cities were ranked, including Greenville (26), Asheville (43), Wilmington (58), Fayetteville (110), Jacksonville (136), Goldsboro (149) and Rocky Mount (160).

Forbes assembles its lists annually, using indicators such as income, job growth and cost-of-doing-business, which includes price of labor, energy, taxes and office space. This year's rankings also rated the attractiveness of a region by figuring in qualifications of the available labor pool, crime rates, housing cost and net migration.

The complete lists are available at www.forbes.com.

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